



Photo from the Inaugural TX Turkey & Hog Hunt

## Notes From the Field: April 2018

April was an exciting month for our Heroes as we had five different events across four

different states. These world-class events included opportunities for turkey hunting, hog hunting, fishing, and one even featured our first-ever culinary couples event. Read all about these events below and don't forget to check out our April Spotlight featuring one of our amazing Purple Heart Heroes. As always, we thank all of you who so faithfully and graciously support WWIA and enable us to facilitate the healing and restoration of our Heroes.



## Events and Fundraisers

### Inaugural TX Turkey & Hog Hunt

*April 6th - 8th*



This inaugural event was a welcomed addition to the WWIA spring calendar. Three Purple Heart Heroes gathered in New Braunfels, TX to enjoy three days of turkey and hog hunting. Despite shifting weather patterns during their stay, our Heroes found great success in the field as all three were able to harvest a turkey and one also harvested a nice hog. As great as the hunting was, the camaraderie and bonds enjoyed amongst brothers was definitely a highlight of the trip. There was also no shortage of great food and music and this event sent our Heroes home with some incredible memories and new friendships. Our sincere appreciation to Hosts Chad Heise and Travis Peace for putting on an outstanding event. Additional thanks to WWIA Associate Dixon Gunther for his assistance and support.

*" This trip has by far been the greatest highlight in the past few years for me by a long shot. There is absolutely no way I could express my gratitude for this amazing group of guys. The hunt itself was awesome but the ability to get away from the everyday craziness and meet these awesome gentlemen has truly made the trip. "*

## **4th Annual DoubleCreek Lodge Turkey Hunt**

**April 13th - 16th**



The 4th Annual DoubleCreek Lodge Turkey Hunt welcomed four of our Heroes to beautiful Hohenwald, TN for four days of relaxation, fellowship, and turkey hunting. Our Heroes experienced outstanding hospitality and home-cooked meals throughout their stay and enjoyed getting to know their fellow Purple Heart recipients and Hosts while in the field and sharing experiences at the dinner table. WWIA Founder and CEO John McDaniel also visited with the Heroes during the weekend, sharing stories and presenting each of them with a challenge coin to honor their service and commemorate their event. We would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to Hosts Dennis Reynolds and Shelley Cohen for another wonderful event. Thanks also to WWIA Guide Jeremy Smith for his exemplary support throughout the event.

*"I cannot express in words to show my gratitude and appreciation for the amazing experiences I've had these last few days. From the moment I pulled into your driveway, I knew I was home. After spending just a few minutes talking to you it felt like I've known you my whole life. Your hospitality is second to none and your hearts are larger than life. People say that God sends angels to the earth to do his work and I firmly believe that you are two of the best. If there were more people like you around, the world would be a better place. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you. If you'll have me I'd love to bring my family back and visit during a break between your events. Take care and God Bless you both.."*

## **9th Annual Wisconsin Cast & Blast**

April 27th - 30th



Five of our Heroes made the trek to Rothschild, WI for the 9th Annual Wisconsin Cast & Blast. Our Heroes enjoyed time in the blinds hunting for turkeys and were also presented with the opportunity to go ice fishing. During their four-day excursion, they weren't just treated to world-class hunting and hospitality, but also to a tour of the [Mullins Cheese Factory](#) to experience some of the world's finest Wisconsin cheese. The accommodations and meals on the event were second-to-none and provided our Heroes with the ideal environment to relax, unwind, and get to know their fellow Purple Heart Heroes over shared stories and experiences. We would like to convey our highest thanks to Hosts Todd and Dawn Bohm for conducting another top-tier event and also to WWIA Guide Jon French for his exceptional care and support of our Heroes.

*"Thank you for the opportunity to attend the 9th Annual Wisconsin Cast and Blast. I had an amazing time with these guys and it felt great to get back into the outdoors. I have forgotten just how much I used to enjoy nature and bonding with guys who share similar backgrounds with me. It was a blessing to be here."*

### 3rd Annual Galveston Couples Fishing & Inaugural Culinary Event

April 27th - 30th



Five of our Purple Heart Heroes and four of their spouses traveled to scenic Galveston, TX for the 3rd Annual Galveston Couples Fishing and Inaugural Culinary Event. There was plenty of great fishing throughout the event as well as laughter and camaraderie as these couples were able to relax, share stories, and get some well-deserved time away. This event also featured WWIA's first-ever culinary arts instruction, introducing these couples to various cooking skills, game preparation, and amazing meals they can prepare and enjoy in their own kitchens. Our praise and gratitude to Brad and Julie Boisen for graciously hosting these couples and giving them an experience that they will cherish for many years to come. We would like to also extend our appreciation to WWIA Guides Gabe Fierros and Crystal Masek for their outstanding support and care of our couples throughout the event. Special thanks go out to WWIA's Culinary Committee (Karen McDaniel, Shelley Cohen, Julie Boisen, Crystal Masek, Dr. Moira Tidball) for their contributions and coordination of this exciting and therapeutic new addition to our event offerings.

*" I just want to thank WWIA for the wonderful opportunity to reconnect with my wife and other couples who have experienced similar challenges. Brad and Julie are the epitomai of gracious hosts. Our Guides Gabe and Crystal were awesome. This is time well spent. "*

*"For the first time in years, I slept through the night. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."*

## **2nd Annual Great Creek Turkey Hunt**

***April 27th - 30th***



Four of our Purple Heart Heroes recently attended the 2nd Annual Great Creek Turkey Hunt in Alberta, VA. Our Heroes were able to find great success in the field as they harvested three beautiful turkeys on their morning hunts. In the evenings they were able to get in some relaxing time on the water as they fished for bass, catfish, and crappie at a local lake and then enjoyed cooking and eating what they had caught. Our Heroes raved about their time at Great Creek and shared that the highlight of the trip was the bonds and newly formed friendships made with their Purple Heart brothers. Our sincere thanks and gratitude to Andy Wilson for hosting another outstanding event, and also to the members of the Great Creek Hunt Club for welcoming and supporting our Heroes so faithfully. Additional appreciation to Major Ball, Bobby Bartle, Chris Baun, and Ryan Couch for guiding our Heroes on their hunts, and to Jeff Stotesberry, Mike Tripp, Scotty Stotesberry, and Roger Engleking for their tremendous assistance throughout the four days. We would also like to recognize and thank WWIA Guide Nick Fox for his leadership and helpfulness throughout the event.

*" I am so grateful for the opportunity to come out to Virginia for this Turkey hunt. From the word go, everyone there was phenomenal. From Mike picking me up at the airport to meeting the other Warriors and the team Andy had with him. I hunted with Andy the first two days and able to harvest my first turkey the very first morning. It was an amazing experience. Andy was a great guide and very knowledgeable of the area. Being able to hunt, relax, do some fishing and just hang out with all the guys was very therapeutic for all of us. I'm so thankful for the opportunity and blessed to have some new friends I'll always be able to reach out to. Thanks to all of you, you made a new turkey hunter for life. Thank you WWIA for this amazing trip. "*

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## WWIA April Spotlight



For our April Spotlight, we are proud to introduce you to WWIA Hero and Guide John Keeney. John has been happily married to his high school sweetheart Kellie for 12 years. Together, they have two children, a beautiful 6-year-old daughter named Kendall and an amazing 3-year-old son named Kolton. John works for Tyson Foods in Cumming, GA as a maintenance manager. In his spare time, John loves to hunt and fish and is a huge football and baseball fan as well.

**How did you first get involved with WWIA?**

A brother from the Marine Corps went on a gator hunt with the Foundation. He had mentioned me to Corrina and she gave me a follow-up call. I had always said that I would never use my injury as a crutch in life, so I initially declined her first invitation to attend a WWIA event. She called me a few more times and I declined those offers as well. I had always thought of WWIA as an organization that took Heroes hunting or fishing that had injuries so severe that they could not hunt or fish like they used to. Corrina called me again sometime later and asked me if I would consider going on an event in order to help someone that was having a hard time. I had never thought about it like that and soon after I was on my way to Missouri for the MOKAN Ducks and Bucks Hunt.

**Why do you choose to be a WWIA Guide on our events?**

It was a no-brainer for me. My love for my wounded brothers and sisters is real and my passion for the outdoors has always been there. I believe wholeheartedly in what WWIA is doing and I knew I had to be part of it. After I returned from my first WWIA event, I realized I had not felt like that since I left the Marine Corps.

**What has been the biggest benefit for you since becoming involved with WWIA?**

Just to have the opportunity to lead Warriors again and give something back to them for all they have sacrificed is truly a gift. Our Guides and Associates have established a real team, it is a feeling that I haven't had since being medically retired from the Marine Corps. It has filled a huge void in my life.

**What is something you would like others to know about WWIA and your own experience with the Foundation?**

This Foundation is the real deal! From the outside looking in it looks like just a weekend of hunting or fishing, but it's so much more than that. WWIA is changing people's lives one event at a time. And our Hosts..... WOW! We have some of the most red-blooded American volunteers you will ever meet. I'm still blown away at every event by the time, hard work, and commitment our Hosts and their friends dedicate year in and year out to ensure each Hero will have the trip of a lifetime.

**What would you say to others who are considering getting involved with WWIA either as a Hero or in any other capacity?**

Sign up now! This will change your life. Nothing will ever beat the brotherhood you have in the military. For me, my second brotherhood has always been my hunting buddies. When you combine brotherhood and the great outdoors you hit gold every time. You will never regret it, and I promise you will create memories you will never forget.



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**Thank you for your support of WWIA and our Purple Heart Heroes!**

**We would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following supporters for their gracious contributions and dedication to WWIA and our Heroes.**

**THANK YOU!**

**Arthur Kandarian \$2,000**

**Help Support our Heroes with Hero Miles!**



Fisher House has been a proud and faithful supporter of WWIA. Did you know that you can help support our Purple Heart Heroes by donating travel miles through the Hero Miles Program? To learn more about how you can donate your travel miles and make a difference in the lives of our Heroes and their families, click [here](http://www.fisherhouse.org) or go to [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org)

**PLEASE SHARE your WWIA experience!**



Thank you for helping us become a top-rated nonprofit in 2017! If you haven't shared your own WWIA experience, would you consider leaving us a review to help us continue this honor for 2018? We appreciate your support of WWIA & our Purple Heart Heroes. Click on the following link to share your WWIA story and to read what others have had to say!

<https://greatnonprofits.org/org/wounded-warriors-in-action-foundation-inc>

### **Want to learn more about WWIA, visit us on online!**

Our website is full of information about who we are, how we serve our Purple Heart Heroes, and how you can get involved! Visit us today! [Click Here!](#)

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### Purple Heart Patriots

Become a Purple Heart Patriot by donating monthly to WWIA and the Heroes we serve! Monthly contributors receive an introductory gift and mention in next month's newsletter.

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◆ **THANK YOU** to all of our [Purple Heart Patriots](#)! We sincerely appreciate your support and generosity. ◆



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